



Focus on **Underground Storage Tanks**

from Ecology's Toxic Cleanup Program

Requirements for Temporarily Closed Underground Storage Tank Systems

What is a temporarily closed tank?

An Underground Storage Tank (UST) is considered temporarily closed when it is taken out of service. In other words, petroleum products are no longer being dispensed from the USTs. A tank must be permanently closed when you have no plans of ever using the tank again. Keep in mind, there may be city, county, fire code, or other local ordinances that have additional requirements for your underground storage tank.

When do you notify Ecology of a temporary tank closure?

You must notify Ecology within thirty days of placing your UST into temporary closure. To meet this requirement, a special form must be completed and returned to Ecology within 30 days of tank closure. The form is entitled, "Underground Storage Tank Closure and Site Assessment Notice," form #ECY 020-95 (Rev. 3/01). If you need a form, call toll free in the state of Washington, 1- 800-826-7716 or (360) 407-7170. The form and many other publications can also be obtained from the Ecology web site at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/ust-lust/electrnc.html.

What are you required to do?

What you are required to do to your UST system during a temporary closure depends on whether or not the tank is empty, what the tanks are made of (steel, fiberglass etc.), and how long the tank will be temporarily closed. Also, in addition to notifying Ecology of your temporary closure, the regulations require that facility compliance tags (the small blue and white license plates) be returned within 30-days after completing closure activities.

The temporary closure requirements are separated in to three (3) categories:

- **Temporary closure less than three months**
- **Temporary closure three to twelve months**
- **Temporary closure more than twelve months**



Temporary Closure LESS THAN THREE MONTHS

- Perform release detection if the tank contains gas, diesel, or other regulated substances. *(If it has not been determined how long the UST system will be in temporary closure, Ecology strongly recommends that all petroleum products be removed from the UST's. **Release detection is not required for empty tanks.**)*
- Maintain corrosion protection systems including corrosion tests every three years. Impressed current systems must perform 60-day rectifier checks.
- Report, investigate, and clean up releases.
- Continue maintaining all records relating to the UST system.

Temporary Closure THREE TO TWELVE MONTHS

- Same as temporary closure less than three months (maintain corrosion protection and meet release detection requirements), AND
- Make sure the tank's vent lines are open and working to allow gases to escape.
- Cap and lock your lines, pumps, and any other equipment to prevent anything from being put into your tank or damaging your equipment.
- Before the UST system can be brought back into service, it must be tightness tested by a **certified UST Supervisor** to make sure the UST system is still in good working order and hasn't experienced any physical damage such as corrosion. *If you continued proper release detection throughout the temporary closure period, then tightness testing is not required prior to being put back into service.*
- Facility compliance tag must be returned to Ecology.

Temporary Closure MORE THAN TWELVE MONTHS

- Same as temporary closure three to twelve months (maintain corrosion protection and meet release detection requirements), OR
- Be permanently closed by a certified UST supervisor if corrosion protection (if required) and release detection monitoring requirements have not been met.

If your UST system does not meet the above requirements, you can request an extension to the permanent closure requirements from Ecology. However, the request must be made before the twelve months are up. Additionally, a site assessment must be completed before you may request the extension from Ecology.

Do you have to pay tank permit fees during temporary closure?

Yes. Tank permit fees are required to be paid by any person who owns an underground storage tank located in the state of Washington and was required to provide notification to Ecology under the federal act. You are required to pay your permit fee until the tank is permanently closed.

Do you have to maintain insurance during temporary closure?

Financial responsibility is not required on your tank if your system is properly closed. However, Ecology highly recommends that you maintain insurance coverage during temporary closure. You are responsible for the environmental and personal damages caused if your tank leaks. If insurance coverage is cancelled during a temporary closure, you may lose your retroactive date. To reinstate the retroactive date, the insured will be required to pay a surcharge. Many times this surcharge comes at a higher cost than the money saved by not paying the premium during a temporary closure. Also, be aware that most pollution policies require that any claim made against the policy be made within six months of the cancellation date. Owners who cancel their policy may experience difficulty securing coverage for older tanks, or for sites with historical contamination.

Okay, I'm ready to re-open my business. What's next?

You will need to notify Ecology by phone (360-407-7170) to find out what documents will be needed to demonstrate compliance with the temporary closure requirements. At a minimum, you need to provide proof of pollution liability insurance coverage. After Ecology receives necessary paperwork, you will be issued a new facility compliance tag which will allow you to operate your UST system.

Glossary

Certified UST Supervisor: A person certified by the International Code Council or another nationally recognized organization, as approved by Ecology, to perform site assessments, decommissioning, installation/retrofitting, tank tightness testing, and cathodic protection. Washington State registered professional engineers who are competent to perform site assessments by means of examination, experience, or education are not required to be certified for site assessment work.

Corrosion Protection (also known as **cathodic protection**): A technology used to prevent the corrosion of a metal surface, such as using a sacrificial anode on a boat.

Empty: All materials have been removed using commonly employed practices so that no more than 2.5 centimeters (one inch) of residue, or 0.3 percent by weight of total capacity of the UST system remains in the system (WAC 173-360-380(1)).

Release Detection (also known as **leak detection**): A variety of methods used to determine whether or not a tank is leaking. Examples include ground water monitoring, vapor monitoring, automatic tank gauging, tank tightness testing with inventory control, and manual tank gauging. There is also leak detection for suction and pressurized piping.

Tightness Test (also known as **precision test**): A method of release detection used to determine if there is a leak in an underground storage tank or piping. This test is usually conducted by trained personnel using specialized equipment. There are two types of tightness test methods: volumetric and non-volumetric.

Where to look in the law if you want to read more

Corrosion Protection	WAC 173-360-320
Definitions	WAC 173-360-120
Financial Responsibility	WAC 173-360-400
Performance Standards for New UST Systems	WAC 173-360-305
Release:	
Cleanup Requirements	WAC 173-360-375 and WAC 173-360-399
Detection	WAC 173-360-330 through 355
Investigation	WAC 173-360-365 and WAC 173-360-370
Reporting	WAC 173-360-360 and WAC 173-360-372
Upgrading Requirements	WAC 173-360-310

Underground Storage Tank Section

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